



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 6, 2021

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chair, Roberta Oeser, called the meeting to order via Zoom in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 on January 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Roll call vote: Roberta Oeser, Chair, Bob Hamilton and Karl Pruter, Selectmen
Also present: Sara Gravell, Town Administrator, Laurie May, Finance Director, Lori Rautiola, Executive Secretary, Members of the Community

GENERAL BUSINESS

Selectmen's Announcements: Roberta stated there was some technical issues with Zoom at the Planning Board meeting on Tuesday. Karl noted there was several people on the Zoom meeting and the capacity at the in person meeting was almost at its maximum amount of people per EMD's size limit at the Rec Center, adding there needs to be measures in place so the people on Zoom can attend and hear clearly. Roberta mentioned the difficulty could have been the bandwidth due to so many people streaming.

Citizen's Forum: Judy Unger Clark voiced her frustrations regarding the Planning Board meeting stating the Board has silenced the resident's voices, and now the meeting was silenced. She stated the Planning Board's meeting was in violation of NH Right to Know Law; she cited RSA 91A:1, adding she was appalled there was no way the people on Zoom could connect with the people at the meeting and the audio problems should have been resolved at this point in time. Judy stated she contacted the Attorney General's Office regarding the issue and was directed to give it to the Select Board and for the Town to seek legal counsel or have a lawsuit. Roberta responded it is a choice to not attend the meetings in person or not, adding the Selectmen do not have authority over the Planning Board and they are not required to live stream meetings.

Jeff Dickler stated the Planning Board is the only board that meets in person and there are planning issues that are very critical to the Town, adding no masks are worn at the meetings so it is an unsafe environment. He added the meetings are not accessible and change needs to take place.

Bob stated he was very frustrated with the audio issues, however it was no one's fault and it is hard to present a project virtually with such large scaled plans and several documents.

Bob mentioned a Zoom meeting will not work for the Deliberative Session. Karl stated there are several issues, the streaming quality verses Zoom, and the venue size is almost at capacity for the Rec. Center and may have to turn people away at the door. He added the Town may want to contact legal counsel. Rick mentioned the meetings that draw crowds may need to move to another platform where there is more space to allow for social distancing. Phil Motta suggested to have people volunteering at the Deliberative with their cell phones accessible to residents in the room and use them as a microphone in order to cut down on the bandwidth. Roberta asked new Zoom callers to announce their names. Dan Whitney and Sean Keating identified themselves.

Consent Agenda - Approval of:

- Payroll 1/7/2021
- Accounts Payable 1/7/2021

Roberta mentioned she did not read the minutes. Karl made a motion to approve the 1/7/2021 payroll. Bob seconded the motion and it passed by roll call vote 3-0. Roberta made a motion to approve the accounts payable 1/7/2021. Bob seconded the motion and it passed by roll call vote 2-0-1. Roberta Aye, Bob Aye, Karl abstained.

Old Business: Roberta stated there was an increase of \$143,000 in the 2021 budget. Karl noted decisions cost money but there should not be cuts to the operating budget, the money is requested in order for the town to operate efficiently. Bob stated he will support the BAC's proposal which is a 3 % increase (\$125,250) over last year's budget (\$4,484,250), adding he was nervous the voters will not pass the budget and ending up with a default. A default budget would mean cuts from the operating budget where there is no room for cuts. It was mentioned the proposed budget would include a 1 % decrease from the Fire budget. A large majority of increases were from rising health care and retirement costs.

Fire Chief Rick Donovan stated the Department has maintained a level budget for many years and has received grants in order to do so, however, calls are increasing (814 calls this year even with calls being down at the start of COVID-19). There was 80 calls in the month of December alone. The Town is growing at a significant rate, 39 new single family homes and the Planning Board just approved a 59 unit development and the Hidden Acres Development is still in progress and the Vandyke Development which just received approval. He continued stating the Board needs to educate the residents on the amount of growth in this town, adding when the Town grows the budget continues to grow as well; adding, the services need to grow along with the Town, you cannot decrease the budget when the Town is growing at a significant rate.

Roberta suggested to cut the bottom-line budget by about \$145,000 and use unanticipated revenue to cover the leftover expenses. It may be risky to do so as the default budget would suffer next year. This funds the town properly and it would return the money to the tax payers.

Rick asked for clarification on the 1 % cut, whether it was 1% of the operating budget (\$800) or 1% of the total budget (\$25-30,000). Phil Motta confirmed it was 1% of operating (\$800). It was noted if the budget gets cut at the Deliberative Session, line items would be cut and budget adjustments made.

Bob stated he cannot support the Department Head request of \$4,627,049. Bob made a motion to approve a budget of \$4,484,250. Roberta seconded the motion. This number excludes paving and gravel

for the roads, the 9th police officer, and the Planning Board. Roberta asked the Board if all were in agreement to use unanticipated revenue for the needs of the town. Karl stated yes, providing that is the number the budget needs to meet. Bob was unsure of using the entirety of unanticipated revenue, adding more cuts may be needed. The motion passed by roll call vote 3-0.

Donna Stratiff questioned when the free service for internet will begin with Consolidated. Sara noted she budgeted for the free service starting in April.

Karl was comfortable with the number, however, he does not like the idea of taking away from roads, but the goal is to have a budget that will be passed by the voters.

Code Enforcement: Sven Heisted thanked the Board for their time and read a letter that was sent to the Select Board regarding his camper permit which was in the process of being revoked. The letter explained the reasoning behind the camper permit and there being no rental units available due the shortage of housing in the area. He apologized for not knowing the Zoning Ordinance and was confused by the definition of a travel trailer and mobile home, adding there was no ill intent on his application. He requested the Board amend the letter to provide a reasonable time for him to remedy the situation so his family will not be homeless, adding he was very surprised the Board took the initiative to contact the gas company to disconnect the gas with no warning. He requested the Board retract this effort to cut the gas from his trailer. Sven stated the septic is in progress and should be completed and approved within a couple days. He requested the Board allow the use of the trailer the same way the ordinance allows when there is a fire (Article III section O). Sven stated he spoke with his neighbors and all are in favor of the trailer being used as a temporary measure.

Bob stated the Board has the authority to issue a camper permit for 60 days, however, with a septic that has not been approved, it is the owner's responsibility to meet the requirements of having the tank emptied so it does not become a health issue. Bob noted there has not been a BOS vote to have the gas removed. Roberta mentioned a mechanical permit had been submitted but not approved, adding she made the call to let the gas company know it was not approved or inspected. Karl concurred with Bob.

Building Inspector, Rick Donovan stated he was disappointed to hear he was not approached regarding the gas lines being disconnected. Installation was done without a permit and some fault was on the installer. In the future when there is permitting issues he should be contacted first in the chain of command. Roberta apologized for not getting approval from Chief Donovan, adding she was concerned with a variance being granted for the mobile home in fear of it becoming an ongoing issue with owners trying to put a mobile home on a building site.

Bob recommended holding off on the fines and court until the Zoning Board makes a decision, as long as the owner understands fines can be issued if the zoning violations continue and the Board of Adjustment denies a variance. Sven acknowledged the fines for violations and thanked the Board for their lenience.

The Board discussed the Code Enforcement position and discussed the duties of the job. The Board agreed to combine the Health Inspector with the Code Enforcement Officer Position and salaries/stipends. All were in agreement with the title of the position being renamed to Zoning Officer.

New Business: The Board discussed warrant articles for the Fire and Rescue lease payment as well as the purchase of the police cruiser. There was discussion on the new police cruiser and whether it should

go on the ballot as a warrant article or use unanticipated revenue to make the purchase. Bob noted to keep \$30,000 in the revolving account and use the rest of the funds from the police detail revolving.

There was a brief discussion on the full time Tax Collector position. Bob noted the position should be a part time position with a part time assistant. Karl agreed. Bob noted to present it to the voters to convert the position to be an elected, part time position. Roberta was also in agreement.

There was discussion on the warrant article for a new roof on the highway garage. It was noted a metal roof was not recommended.

Tax payment plan: Roberta stated the Tax Collector, Carol Donovan recommended to waive the interest on several tax payments. Karl agreed. Roberta made a motion to waive the interest on the elderly residents that are making their payments on a regular basis. Bob seconded the motion and it passed by roll call vote 3-0.

Roberta made a motion to approve the tax payment plan for Map 3 Lot 66, Bush Hill Rd. as recommended by the Tax Collector. Bob seconded the motion and it passed by roll call vote 3-0.

The discussion returned to warrant articles regarding the police cruiser. Chief Anair joined the meeting and was concerned the account would be depleted for next year if funds are taken from the detail revolving verses putting on a warrant article. Roberta was not willing to take a chance in the warrant not passing and would like to use the unanticipated funds and take \$17,000 from the police detail revolving.

Informational Items & Updates: Meeting House Oversight Committee has not been able to meet due to Covid but it has not been forgotten. Sara informed the Board a new web site design was in progress.

Other Business: RFP's for an IT specialist were briefly discussed. Roberta noted she read Tim Wessel's concerns, TeleTech member, regarding a transition, however, she did not feel there would be a problem, adding Umbral did not submit a bid to the RFP. Karl was in agreement with Roberta. Chief Dan Anair stated this was the first he had heard of needing a new IT specialist and was concerned especially with the new software. He requested to be a part of future IT decisions. Bob stated things moved quite rapidly as the contract was up the end of December, adding he was in agreement with Sara's recommendation.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Rautiola
Executive Secretary